

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 192141

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ETRD, SHUM, PDIP, ES, US

SUBJECT:MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR BERTRAND GALINDO

1. ON AUGUST 8, AT HIS REQUEST, AMBASSADOR BERTRAND GALINDO MET WITH ACTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRANK DEVINE FOR A TOUR D'HORIZON DISCUSSION OF UNITED STATES/ SALVADORAN RELATIONSHIPS. PRIMARILY HE WAS INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE DIRECTION AND STATE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS, THE PROSPECTS FOR THE \$90 MILLION SAN LORENZO LOAN IN THE IDB, AND APPOINTMENT OF A NEW AMBASSADOR FROM THE UNITED STATES.

2. BERTRAND POINTED OUT THAT THE GOES HAS TAKEN A NUMBER OF CONSTRUCTIVE STEPS RELATED TO U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS. HE CITED MEASURES TO PROTECT THE JESUITS, REPORT ON THE RICHARDSON INVESTIGATION, ASSURANCES TO OBSERVE THE VIENNA CONVENTION RE TREATMENT OF DETAINED AMERICANS, THE JOINT CHURCH-STATE COMMISSION ESTABLISHED BY PRESIDENT ROMERO, AND OPENING DIALOGUE WITH POLITICAL OPPOSITION
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AND OTHER SECTORS OF SALVADORAN SOCIETY. HE MENTIONED ALSO THAT PRESIDENT ROMERO HAS STATED THAT ALL POLITICAL EXILES CAN RETURN TO EL SALVADOR. DEVINE ACKNOWLEDGED THE POSITIVE NATURE OF THESE ACTIONS BY PRESIDENT ROMERO. HE ALSO SPOKE OF THE CONCERN AND INDIGNATION IN THE U.S.

WHICH HAD ARISEN OVER THE THREAT TO THE JESUITS, AND

EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE MEASURES TAKEN ON THEIR BEHALF.

3. BERTRAND ASKED ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF USG SUPPORT FOR THE SAN LORENZO LOAN, GIVEN THESE POSITIVE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIONS BY THE GOES. DEVINE REPLIED THAT HE FRANKLY COULD NOT SAY WHAT THE DECISION WOULD BE NOW BUT THE CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION IN EL SALVADOR AND THE ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT ROMERO WERE HELPFUL. HE SAID THAT THE SUBJECT WOULD BE REDISCUSSED SHORTLY WITHIN THE USG. BERTRAND SAID THE GOES DID NOT INTEND TO PRESENT THE LOAN REQUEST IMMEDIATELY BUT WANTED SOME INDICATION OF WHETHER AND IF SO WHEN THE USG COULD SUPPORT IT. THE GOES WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT THE USG DESIRES OR NEEDS IN ORDER TO FAVOR THE SAN LORENZO REQUEST IN THE IDB. DEVINE REPLIED THAT HE WOULD SEEK CLARIFICATION IN THAT REGARD AND BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH THE AMBASSADOR.

4. BERTRAND EXPRESSED HIS INTEREST IN SEEING PATT DERIAN FOR A DEBRIEFING ON HER VISIT TO EL SALVADOR.

5. BERTRAND SAID GOES WAS CONCERNED WITH IMPROVING ITS IMAGE IN THE U.S. AND WITH CONGRESS PARTICULARLY. HE ASKED ABOUT THE ADVISABILITY OF HIRING INDIVIDUALS OR FIRMS TO REPRESENT EL SALVADOR FOR THIS PURPOSE. (FORMER AMBASSADOR AND PROTOCOL CHIEF HENRY CATTO WAS MENTIONED CONFIDENTIAL

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BY BERTRAND AT THIS POINT.) HE SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN EL SALVADOR'S PROBLEMS TO THE VARIOUS CONSTITUENCIES IN THE U.S. DEVINE NOTED THAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAD TRIED SUCH A PUBLIC RELATIONS APPROACH WITH MIXED RESULTS, SOME POSITIVE, SOME NEGATIVE. ONE THING TO BE BORNE IN MIND IS THAT IT IS THE REALITY, NOT JUST THE IMAGE, WITH WHICH WE ARE CONCERNED. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE REALITY IS A GOOD ONE, PROPER PUBLIC DISSEMINATION CAN BE VERY HELPFUL. HE ADDED THAT THE GOES SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER ALL FACETS IN REACHING A DECISION ON THIS TACTIC.

6. BERTRAND ALSO WONDERED IF HE SHOULD SPEAK DIRECTLY WITH KEY FIGURES SUCH AS CONGRESSMEN FRASER AND KOCH, TO EXPLAIN EL SALVADOR'S POSITION. DEVINE REPLIED THAT CONGRESS IS OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONTACT WITH THEM WOULD SEEM WORTHWHILE. AMONG OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, THE FIELD SHOULD NOT BE LEFT ONLY TO THOSE WITH NEGATIVE INFORMATION AND VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR. IF THERE ARE POSITIVE FACTS TO BE ADDUCED, THESE SHOULD BE MADE KNOWN. THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ARE USUALLY WELL INFORMED, HOWEVER, AND IT WOULD NOT BE

HELPFUL TO APPROACH THEM MERELY ON AN ARGUMENTATIVE OR PROPAGANDISTIC BASIS. DEVINE ADDED THAT IT WOULD, HOWEVER, PROVIDE A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY TO ASCERTAIN THE CONGRESSMEN'S VIEWS DIRECTLY. DEVINE SAID THAT THE USG IS AWARE THAT OVERNIGHT CHANGE IN A COUNTRY IS NOT POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, THERE MUST AT LEAST BE MOVEMENT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND THAT CERTAINLY SINCE JULY 1 THERE WERE INDICES OF THE GOES' GOOD INTENTIONS WHICH WE HOPE WILL CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE.

7. BERTRAND SAID THAT THE ABSENCE OF A U.S. AMBASSADOR PLAYS A FACTOR IN THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF EL SALVADOR AS DOES THE OUTSTANDING SAN LORENZO LOAN. BERTRAND SAID THAT IN EL SALVADOR IT WAS CONSIDERED AN ACT OF HOSTILITY
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WHEN SALLY SHELTON DIDN'T COME FOR THEY THOUGHT IT WAS A DELIBERATE ACT BY THE U.S. TO SIGNAL ITS DISPLEASURE. DEVINE SIMPLY SAID THAT SUCH WAS NOT THE INTENTION NOR THE CASE AND THAT TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF AN AMBASSADOR WOULD BE NAMED.

8. WHILE ON THE SUBJECT OF AMBASSADORS, DEVINE MENTIONED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT BERTRAND MIGHT BE MOVING ON SOON. BERTRAND SAID "YES", THE GOES FELT THAT ITS CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT ALSO REQUIRED A CHANGE IN AMBASSADORS TO THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD PERHAPS BE GOING TO THE OAS. THE MEETING ENDED ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE REEXAMINING ITS POSITION ON THE \$90 MILLION IDB LOAN IN LIGHT OF RECENT GOES ACTIONS, AND THAT SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS WILL BE DELINEATED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. CHRISTOPHER

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